

From a Bar in Elizabeth, New Jersey

have to pretend
i am someone else
someone who smiles
while she pours drinks
tilts the bottle just right
so the liquor flirts
with the air
on the way into the glass
a foot & a half of formica
defines our role
all night they mine
my face for a clue
think i am someone
they can love
slur their dedications
in half-light
by midnight
cocaine's stinging
bird mouth whoops
at the winter sky
through open door
this helps them
pretend they are
someone else
forget the snow
piling up on hoods
of cars
forget the children
sheeted in beds
sleep wrapped around
their bright bodies



Sharon Venezia

Sharon Venezia received an MA in creative writing from San Francisco State University where she won the Mark Linenthal Award for her poem "Meanwhile." She is currently completing a manuscript titled *The Silence of Doorways*. She is a co-director of the Valley Contemporary Poets and a member of Writers at Work. Some of her work can be found in *Awosting Alchemy*, *Reed*, *Transfer*, *Midway Journal* as well as other online and print journals. She can be found at sharonvenezio.com